

Project Genesis

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Summary: As the Covenant armada encroaches on Earth, Dr.Halsey's Spartans may not be enough to prevent the the ultimate genocide of humanity. Colonel Ackerson's contention of Dr. Halsey drives him to create Project Genesis, generating soldiers rivaling her own.

1. Awakening

Chapter 1: Awakening

****1500 Hours, September 5, 2517 (Military Calendar) Jericho VII, Lambda Serpentis System****

Lieutenant Junior Grade Jacob Keyes gazed upon the fiery red light of the Lambda Serpentis star. He surveyed the file on the last target on his mission. Number 13's genetic markers were almost as close as Dr. Halsey's so called perfect subject, John-117. His eyes moved rapidly over the document until he reached an article containing the subject's predispositions for aggression: extremely high. If number 13 was refused, that would probably be the sole reason; everything else was nearly perfect.

A young woman approached; Dr. Halsey. The woman spearheading the SPARTAN project. She had mats of dark hair and glasses pushed high onto her nose. Captain Keyes saw her slender figure and blushed.

"You know the drill," she said nonchalantly, "Parents inspecting the school for our child." She turned and grasped the Lieutenant's hand in hers. Keyes quickly turned away. They had done this procedure dozens of time but he still didn't like the idea of walking around with a _civilian._

Lieutenant Keyes and Dr. Halsey strode hand-in-hand to the playground of Ballantine City Primary Education Facility No. 12. The Lieutenant observed a black field. Dozens of children held what looked like

scoops in their hands, one team red, and one team blue. Lieutenant Keyes saw their synchronized actions and realized they were playing gravball.

One boy stood out among others; their subject, number 13. He tall and skinny, but sinewy muscle outlined his figure. His long jet-black hair fell into his even darker eyes. He didn't bother to brush it away.

Number 13 carried the anti-gravity ball in his scoop and charged to the opposing goal, strong-arming those who were in his way. He threw the ball with incredible speed into the goal, and scored. The goalie of the opposing team then tripped him, angry that the goal had come at his own expense. Number 13 threw off his protective facemask and cursed at the other boy. The other boy said something back, and suddenly number 13 was upon him, pinning him down with one arm and punching his jaw with the other. Several instructors managed to peel number 13 off the boy, whose face was bloody and bruised. His arm hung off his face at an awkward angle. Number 13 turned and fought the instructors trying to immobilize him, and surprisingly, he seemed to be winning.

Lieutenant Keyes recalled number 13's report and his predispositions for aggression. "Are you sure about this?" he asked doubtfully.

"This boy is marked for SPARTAN, and whether you like it or not, we have to give him a chance," replied Dr. Halsey. "If certain attributes he is flagged for are even more prominent than we expect, he can still make it into the program."

Keyes watched more school staff finally managed to halt number 13's rampage. The boy was being hauled off by several instructors when Dr. Halsey approached.

"Excuse me," she said. "I need to speak with the boy for a moment."

One of the instructors shook his head. "It's policy. We need to enforce some disciplinary action on this child because his father obviously won't." From this distance Keyes was able to see the name engraved on the boy's uniform: _"Tate, Ryan."_

Dr. Halsey nodded. "That's why I'm here," she said. "I'm a psychologist and I've been hired by the boy's parents to try and delve into his... violent expressions."

Keyes's eyes moved from Dr. Halsey to the instructor. Dr. Halsey's face was serious and showed no expression. The leader of the group looked quizzically at Dr. Halsey for a moment and then said, "Fine, but this better be quick." Keyes marveled at the doctor's capability of inventing and changing ideas in crucial situations.

Dr. Halsey approached Ryan, who rubbed his wrist. "Excuse me," she said, pulling out a silver disk from her pocket, "Do you know what it is?"

"A quarter," number 13 answered. "People on Earth used to use them for money."

"Correct," said Dr. Halsey. She held out the coin and flipped it over between her thumb and index finger. "One side has man on it. The other has an eagle holding arrows."

The boy nodded, watching the coin's every move as it flipped deftly between Dr. Halsey's fingers. She said, "We are going to play a game. I want you to call in midair which side is going to land face up when it lands on the ground. If you win, you get to keep it. Ready?"

"Yeah sure," the boy said eagerly. His eyes began to hone in on the coin and its projected arc.

Dr. Halsey tossed the coin up in the air. It spun and arched gracefully towards the ground. At the last second, number 13 shouted, "Eagle!"

The coin landed on the grass, the shining picture of the man face up.

"I'm sorry, but you didn't win," said Dr. Halsey.

"What?" the boy fumed. "I always win!"

Lieutenant Keyes noted the position of the Lambda Serpentis star, shining directly into the boy's eyes.

"Are you sure that was completely fair?" he whispered to Dr. Hasley, pointing to the position of the sun.

She sighed. "Our facility is only given enough funding for half the number of subjects there are. Even _if _he passed this test, the probability of him being accepted into SPARTAN is extremely low. Even _more _so now since we saw what he is capable of." She pointed to the boy who had been injured by number 13, who was being hauled off by paramedics. "Did you read the file containing his tendency of violence and aggression?" she added.

Keyes nodded. According to that particular file, if number 13 was to be accepted into the military, his aggressiveness could interfere with higher-level thinking; unsuitable for the coordination required for project SPARTAN.

"Then you know why he can't be accepted," Dr. Halsey said. She turned and began to leave. Keyes began to follow her, taking one last glance at number 13. Ironically, his failure in the game and denial of entrance into project SPARTAN saved him from a great deal of pain and suffering, but Keyes felt strange somehow, as if denying him entrance would have an even greater impact on mankind.

2. Jericho VII

Chapter 2: Jericho VII

0418 Hours, February 12, 2525 (Military Calendar)/Lambda Serpentis System, Jericho VII

The ground shook as thousands of Covenant troops began their assault on Jericho VII. Staff Sergeant Ryan Tate stood along with his platoon

of troops, ready to expend their lives on a moment's notice. Black streaks began to crisscross the horizon; thousands of Covenant troops. Tate spit out the cigar in his mouth and discarded it on the ground.

A transmission blared in his headset: _"Bravo team! You're our last hope! You can't let this city fall!"_ Nobody mentioned that it didn't matter whether or not this battle was won or lost. The Covenant would glass the planet from orbit regardless, leaving billions dead.

Archaius City was their last line of defense. All other strongholds had fallen, and the marines had retreated and engaged guerilla warfare to keep the Covenant at bay. But Tate knew he would have to face the Covenant in a direct confrontation eventually, and this was it. He drew his S2 AM sniper rifle and took aim at a nearby Banshee. A single shot fired from the rifle, producing a satisfying _crack!_ One of the anti-gravity pods on the end of the flying machine was hit, and the flier tumbled to the ground, trailing dense smoke.

Thousands of Covenant troops marched into the city, hungry for blood. "All teams fire! Open fire!" Tate commanded. The air filled with thousands of armor piercing rounds. The front five rows of Grunts were mercilessly cut down under the barrage of sustained fire, but hundreds more took their place.

"Shredder rounds!" Tate shouted. Dozens of marines ejected their spent clips and inserted new ones. Tate jammed the new clip into his assault rifle with a satisfying _clack_ and opened fire. He pulled the trigger and a trio of Grunts fell. Another sustained burst and the methane rigs of two more Grunts were pierced by shredder rounds, releasing bluish gas into the air. Scores of Grunts trampled their fallen brethren.

Hordes of aliens wielding deflective shields called out orders to the low-level Grunts, who regrouped and attacked, Jackals in the front, Grunts in the center. The marine next to Tate shrieked as explosive needles penetrated her flesh and exploded a second later. The marine fell into shock before her body even hit the ground. Tate wordlessly stripped the marine of her ammo and opened fire once again.

The marine next to Tate shouted, "Grenades!" Tate primed one of his frags and tossed it into the center of the Covenant formation, _behind_ the shielding aliens. It exploded, scattering the armored phalanx. Tate then keyed his com: "Snipers! Take out the shielded bastards!" A series of muffled shots sliced through the air to the Jackals' unprotected flank, halting the Covenant assault. Without Jackals to lead the attack, the Grunts scattered their formation, panicked. Tate watched as Grunts were cut down by sustained fire and sporadic _cracks_ of sniper rifles that split the air.

Confident that he was out the range of the Covenant plasma weapons, Tate drew his sniper rifle and opened fire. Three shots split the air, and three targets fell. The last shot took out an entire file of Grunts that had been foolish enough to stand in a straight line. The armor-piercing sabot round penetrated a Grunt's chest and continued on its path out the alien's back, killing two more Grunts before finally coming to a stop, embedded in a Jackal's head.

The tide of the battle began to turn. Tate discarded his empty sniper rifle and shouldered his assault rifle. He crouched, and opened fire, cutting down a column of Grunts. Two more fell from a controlled burst, blue blood pooling near wounds in their heads. As the sergeant reloaded, a familiar screeching sound reached his ears that he had come to associate with Banshees. Sure enough, a squad of Banshee flyers veered overhead in a "V" formation.

"Randall!" Tate shouted. "Give me that damn Jackhammer!" A marine approached and handed off the rocket launcher to Tate. Tate loaded the launcher and fired two rockets into the air. The rockets flared and crashed into the two nearest Banshees, which spiraled to the ground trailing smoke. The rest banked towards the ocean and flew in for a second pass. Before they could fire all five of the remaining Banshees exploded. A wave of heat rushed over Tate, who recognized the explosion as being caused by napalm fougasses.

Tate was so focused on watching the intense explosion that the first indication that the Covenant had regrouped was when a wave of plasma lanced across his chest plate. Tate flung the melted armor to the ground and turned to face the threat. Three plasma grenades arched through the air. One attached itself to the shoulder plate of the marine next to Tate, whom he recognized as Private Randall.

Tate shouted, "Take off the armor!" but Randall panicked and fell to the ground. The grenade exploded, and Tate felt Randall's warm blood splash across the side of his face. One by one marines fell from the regrouped assault. Tate grabbed the trigger of a nearby chain-gun emplacement and fired. The turret spewed bullets left and right, rattling Tate's teeth as it did so. It was effective, but hardly enough to stop the Covenant rampage.

Tate ducked to avoid a plasma bolt and threw his remaining grenades over the thin armor surrounding the chain-gun. They detonated with strident _thuds _and sent debris flying into the air. Hordes of Covenant marched through the clouds of dirt and shrapnel. Two shots grazed his shoulder plate, searing the armor and burning Tate's flesh. He didn't even bother to remove the smoldering armor while he reloaded his assault rifle. Tate expended the clip in one long burst, killing two Jackals and three Grunts. After exhausting all of his assault rifle ammo he shouldered the Jackhammer launcher that Randall had given him and fired into the center of the Covenant formation. A Jackal's body was flung a full twenty meters backwards by the force of the explosion. The second shot disintegrated a column of Grunts, a smoldering crater formed where dozens of Covenant warriors had once stood. He dropped the smoking Jackhammer launcher and ran; that was all he could do.

Tate glanced left and right. Scores of corpses, both Covenant and human, littered the ground, riddled with bullets and seared by plasma. Other marines joined him in retreat, and were gunned down in turn. He forced the sudden realization that he was the last surviving marine down his throat. He would live to fight another day. The battlefield wouldn't become his grave.

Lances of badly aimed explosive needles and plasma flew over Tate's shoulder. A single streak of plasma finally impacted his back. He collapsed, unable to move.

Tate was more tired than he had ever been in his life. He slowly

raised his hand to his shoulder and pulled it away. It came away moist with his own blood. He tried to reach for the M6D sidearm in his belt holster, but before he could do so, a trio of cloudy figures circled over his head.

His fading vision picked out three biped creatures standing over his body. They were taller than the standard human and wore faintly luminous green armor that encased their bodies, underlined in layers of black. For a second Tate thought the figures were Covenant, but they turned and opened fire in unison on the aliens. A trio of needles stuck to one of the figure's armor, and exploded. Instead of falling to the ground as it should have, its armor glowed faintly with a yellow luster. The figure continued firing, unharmed. They stepped over Tate's body and kept the Covenant at bay, against impossible odds. Spartans...

His vision finally faded, leaving only blackness.

End
file.